

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 COTONO 01945 290716Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 SCS-06 CA-01 PPT-01 H-01 HA-05

/028 W

-----028348 291140Z /10

R 281300Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0304

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E.O. 11652; /, /A

TAGS: CASC, DM, US

SUBJ: DEPARTMENT NOTE TO BENINESE AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 302330

1. IF GOVERNMENT OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN (GPRB) DOES INDEED CONVEY TO EMBASSY ASSURANCES CONTAINED IN NOTE PRESENTED TO AMBASSADOR BOYA (REFTEL), IT WOULD BE A MAJOR CONCESSION ON BENINESE INTERIOR MINISTRY'S PART AND A POSITIVE INDICATION OF GPRB'S EFFORT TO POLISH ITS RATHER TARNISHED IMAGE. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, HOWEVER, WHETHER FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL BE ABLE TO PERSUADE INTER MINISTRY TO CONCUR IN WHAT COULD BECOME A PRECEDENT-MTTING PROCEDURE, AS OTHER WESTERN EMBASSIES REPRESENTED HERE WOULD PROBABLY SEEK SAME GUARANTEES.

2. EVEN IF GPRB ULTIMATELY DOES GIVE US THESE ASSURANCES, THERE IS LIKELY TO BE DELAY OF SEVERAL WEEKS WHILE QUESTION IS REVIEWED BY "COMPETENT AUTHORITIES". IN ADDITION, AS THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE JANUARY 16, 1977 MERCENARY ATTACK APPROACHES, WE CAN EXPECT RENEWED CALLS FOR VIGILANCE DURING THE WEEKS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING AND FOLLOWING THE ANNIVERSARY. A SPURT OF VIGILANT ZEAL COULD LEAD TO FURTHER ARBITRARY ARRESTS. CONSEQUENTLY, EVEN IF PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

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DO NOT SEEM TO WARRANT ISSUANCE OF FORMAL TRAVEL ADVISORY, BEPIEVE MINIMUM DEPARTMENT SHOULD DO IS SEND REMINDER TO NEIG RORING AFRICAN POSTS TO DISCOURAGE NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL TO BENIN, AND TO ENSURE THAT ANY AMERICANS VISITING COTONOU CHECK IN WITH EMBASSY. IF ASSURANCES ARE NOT FORTHCOMING WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME -- TWO MONTHS, FOR EXAMPLE -- OR IF WE HAVE ANY FURTHER ARBITRARY ARRESTS, DEPARTMENT COULD

PROCEED WITH FORMAL TRAVEL ADVISORY ISSUANCE.

3. WE AGREE THAT BENNETT DOES NOT FALL INTO CATEGORY OF  
UNSUSPECTING TOURIST. THOMPSON

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CITIZEN PROTECTION, DIPLOMATIC NOTES  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Executive Order:** N/A  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
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22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009